

JUN 12 1966

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P.E.N. Comes to New York

For the first time in 42 years, the International P.E.N. is meeting in New York, bringing together more than 600 poets, playwrights, essayists, editors and novelists from 56 countries, numbering among them some of the most distinguished figures in contemporary literature. The talks will deal with the influence of the social scientist on the writer, the part played by publisher and editor in the finished product, the use of other media in conjunction with words as a form of expression. In considering these and similar topics, P.E.N. is living up to its resolve to provide politically neutral ground for the discussion of common artistic problems.

While the Soviet Union has withdrawn her delegation, the meetings will retain a thoroughly cosmopolitan character. Delegates from other Eastern European countries will meet not only those from the West but also writers in exile; naturalistic writers will meet expressionists; committed writers will meet the disengaged. Obviously the discussion will not provide solutions, probably not even agreement. But in turning all facets to the light, by letting each writer know that what troubles him troubles others equally, these meetings can be both comfort and goad.

Ultimately each man must sit down and face that blank sheet of paper, whether in Kuala Lumpur or Paterson. In that regard all writers are one.